

# CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

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VOL. II.

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NO. 21.

A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you—JOHN xiii. 34.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

## SKETCHES NO. III.

### *The Sadducees of the New Testament.*

The sect of the Sadducees, mentioned in the New Testament, derived its name from a person of the name of *Sadoc*, who flourished in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, about two hundred and sixty-three years before Christ. This *Sadoc* was the pupil of Antigonos Sochæus, president of the Sanhedrim; an eminent Jewish Doctor, who in his lectures inculcated upon his scholars the reasonableness of serving God, from the innate and intrinsic excellence of the *duty* itself, not from the servile principle of mercenary recompence. From this doctrine of so celebrated a Rabbi, *Sadoc* deduced this inference—That there was no *futurity*, and that all the rewards which the Deity bestows are solely confined to this life. Sanguine in this sentiment, and active in propagating it, he gained a number of adherents, who espoused his principles, and from them were denominated Sadducees. Their Creed is thus concisely represented; the Sadducees assert that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit. They denied the immortality of the soul, and the existence of all spiritual and immaterial beings—they acknowledged, indeed, that the world was formed by the power of God, and was superintended by his providence, but that the *soul*, at death, suffered one common extinction with the body. Hence that captious query, concerning the woman who had survived seven husbands, which, consistently with their avowed principles, they addressed to our Lord for his solution, thinking by it, to involve him in an inextricable dilemma. They interrogated him to determine for them, to which of *her seven* deceased husbands she should be assigned in a future state. This sect acknowledged the Scriptures only to be of divine authority, and obliga-

tory upon men as a system of religion and morals, and paid no regard to those *traditional* maxims and *human* institutions which the *Pharisees* so highly exalted, and even revered above the Scriptures themselves. As to numbers, this sect was inconsiderable, but this deficiency was supplied by the dignity and eminence of the persons who expounded its principles—for the most illustrious among the Jews, either as to family or opulence were Sadducees.—Luke mentions a high priest who was of the sect of the Sadducees—and Josephus mentions several others, as being exalted to the supreme dignity in church and state, who were Sadducees. Their principles, however, were not popular,—They were only adopted, as the Epicurean principles were in Greece, and at Rome, by a few persons of the first quality. The following is the account which Josephus gives of this sect. “The Sadducees maintain, that the soul perishes with the body. They pay no regard to the observance of any prescriptions, except the injunctions of Scripture. They deem it a virtue to maintain disputes with that wisdom which others espouse. Those who have adopted their tenets are but few, but those *few*, are persons of the first distinction—Hardly any business of the state is transacted by them; for when they are invested with any civil office, it is entirely against their inclinations, and solely through necessity—for then they conform to the measures of the *Pharisees*, otherwise the common people would never bear them.” The same historian in another place, informs us, that this sect strenuously maintained the perfect freedom and liberty of the human will, in opposition to the *Essenes* and *Pharisees* who were predestinarians and fatalists—and observes, that in their mutual intercourse with each other, they were morose and savage; and that in their judicial sentences, they were always for inflicting punishment on criminals with the most rigid severity. \* \* \*

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER.

## SERIOUS REFLECTIONS.

Nature has held out a thousand deceptive illusions which have intoxicated the imagination and misled the judgment of man. The flowerets of fancy have cast their upas influence on the path of life, to hide the native soil, branded with the iron of priestcraft, as hideous and deformed. Son of man! tear down the veil that false philosophy has cast over the truths of God, and dare to exhibit the ways of Deity to man, as equal and just.

The march of the human mind has been rapid, the sun of science has risen in splendour, and the gloomy clouds, gathering fast, have receded,—true, they have not yet sunk below the horizon of the moral world; they yet lower; and, fringed with the rubiate tint of the sun's reflected light, they enchant by their beauty, and fill the mind with the fond foolish idea, that they are as permanent as eternity.

Thus have the systems of men, bearing in some points a resemblance to truth, attracted by the trappings of bigotry, overcame mankind and caused them to bow with an eastern idolatry, to the Baals set up for worship. At this our day many thousands have ceased to bow the knee to the idol, and have left nearly all the foolish appendages of his religion.

In the darkest periods of the church we have seen the light of revelation, like the rainbow of heaven encircling the moral world with its arch of glory, an attendant on the clouded vale, and a sure token that the angry storm should be hushed, and the wide spread family of man should never be completely overwhelmed with the waves of destructive error—yes, with confidence let it be repeated, that the Bible has thus been of advantage to men, tho' to it many things have been added, and other taken away. The time has however arrived that we can discover the



corruptions; and, let us add, explode them.

The piece signed "Marcus," page 70, has led to these reflections, and we shall pursue the subject by enquiring first, what has been added; and, my brethren, recollect the awful and certain denunciation penned by the revelator, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book."

The Bible informs us, "There is one God, and there is none other but he; there is but *one God the Father*." Let not man add unto this, as he has done, and say, that there are three persons in the Godhead.

The Bible informs us "There shall be *one Jehovah* and his name shall be *one*." Let not men any longer add to this, and say that he is named Son, and Holy Ghost.

The Bible reads "In the day, thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" men have added to this the word, *eternally*—let them beware of the plagues written in this book.

Holy writ informs us that "the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner;" yet men have added to this, by saying that the sinner shall not be recompensed on earth, but in hell.

We shall secondly examine what has been taken away. Scripture informs us "every tongue shall confess to God," "That at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that *every* tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

The dogmas of men have taken from this testimony, and assert that some will not confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. The infallibility of the pope, the eternity of hell torments, the doctrines of the trinity and original sin, have all been added by the interest or vanity of mankind.

Several of these ideas have been abandoned and we may fairly expect that a few years will totally explode them; swift as the lightning from the thunder cloud, they must flash their last glare, and be buried in the darkness which created them.

It must be gratifying to behold those who worship the beast and have his

mark now trembling lest deceived man will "worship God."

Every means is grasped to continue his kingdom. Tracts are circulating with the image of the beast upon them, filled with lies, and the abomination of desolation; beware of 'the hail which shall sweep away the refuge of lies'—beware of that light which shall annul the covenant with hell." Ah, let them beware!

There was a time when those who added to what was written, came forth to oppose the minister of Jesus, but they were discomfited, and have learned wisdom by defeat; to their pulpits they retired and hurled the vengeance of an Almighty Devil on the sons of Adam, but from the light of enquiry they hide, and shrink from investigation; like the tortoise they think it most wise to draw their heads into their shell.

Here we shall stop; we cannot, however, but rejoice that mankind can think for themselves and exercise the heaven born privileges; oh! that they would open the Bible and look in it for directions, and leave the systems which are upheld by men, and are evanescent; they shall fade before the light of reason, and the fiat of revelation shall destroy the corruptions which have attended the worship of men called Christians.

RUTH.

### ON THE MOTION OF TWO NATURES IN CHRIST.

FROM THE MONTHLY REPOSITORY. VOL. 4 PAGE 660.

Without dwelling on the absurdity of the supposition of two natures so infinitely dissimilar, as proper Deity and simple humanity, constituting one individual being; or showing how the use made of the notion of the natures in Christ, renders a great part of the New Testament unintelligible, it is easy to show, that the mere idea of two natures by no means answers the purpose of its advocates, and that to maintain their unscriptural opinions, they are necessitated to speak of each of the natures as a real intelligent being, capable of distinct personal actions, in the one Christ; by which in reality, they make him two beings, persons, or intelligent agents. They suppose that

Christ in his divine nature, or the divine nature in him, spoke and acted distinct from, and independent of, his humane nature; that many things he said were simply the language of, and related to, his divine nature: which evidently supposes his divine nature to be a real intelligent being, distinct from his humanity. Again, they assert that he said some things simply as man, and which could be true only of his human nature; to be ingenuous, they should rather say of his human person; for they speak of his human nature as an intelligent person, and as performing by itself real personal actions: and they admit that his human nature only suffered and died; but his sufferings and death were the sufferings and death of a real being. If Christ was one individual being or person whatever he said or did must have been said and done by that one individual being or person. If, then, Trinitarians will be ingenuous and explicit they must drop the ambiguous phrase of two natures, and say at once, what their reasoning implies, and absolutely requires, that Christ is two persons, two individual beings, possessed of as essentially different qualities and powers as Deity and humanity; that these two beings, though united, remained distinct, retained all distinct qualities, and in certain instances acted separately; that the one knew what the other was ignorant of, and could do what the other was incapable of performing; and that the one died, while the other remained immortal. It may, however, involve them in some difficulty to prove, how a divine person or being, and a human person, or being, could both of them be Christ, and yet there be but one Christ, or how the word and works of both could be the word and works of one anointed person, as the word Christ signifies. N. B.

A few copies of the first volume of the Christian Messenger, neatly bound, for sale at No. 58 Chesnut street, at 2 dolls. per volume,—where may be also had, Ballou on Atonement, Kneeland's Lectures, Philadelphia Hymn Book, and a variety of pamphlets.

The Universalist Church in Lombard street, will be opened on Christmas eve; divine service will commence at half past 6 o'clock.



## Christian Messenger.

Philadelphia, Saturday, December 23, 1820.

## A TREATISE ON THE CARNAL MIND.

Continued from page 80.

"If I should say, that one event, or one thing, may take place independent of Divine efficiency, who will venture to set the bounds where I may consistently stop; or draw for me the line of distinction, between events which take place by Divine efficiency, and those which take place independent of God? If one event may take place without Divine efficiency, why not two, ten, or ten thousand? And why may not all things be accounted for in the same manner?"

"He who can demonstrate that one event has been produced, without Divine agency, will meet with no difficulty to invalidate every argument, which can be advanced in proof of the being of a God. And he who denies the universality of Divine operation, has not, that I can see, an inch of ground left, upon which he can consistently dispute an Atheist."

But, says one, will it do to attribute all acts, all events to God?

I do not hesitate to answer, Yes; all real acts, all real events; that is to say, all *truth*: for God is the fountain of truth, and of course all truth must be from him. But falsehoods, imaginary events, deception, and *lies*, are the works of the devil; they proceed from the flesh that lusteth to envy; or the *carnal mind* which is enmity against God, not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

It is the motive of the actor which constitutes all acts, in a moral sense, either good or bad. And in every sense in which God may be considered the cause of any act, or event, he being infinitely good in all his attributes, and consequently can have none but a good motive, in that sense, every act, or event, must be good. And so far as man may be considered the cause of any act, or event, that action is good or bad, holy or sinful, righteous or wicked, according to the good or evil mo-

tive or intention of the actor. Hence the same act which is evil, or sinful, in man, because he meant it unto evil, is good in God, because he meant it unto good. See Gen. xlv, 5; 1, 20.

HE, who is totally incapable of possessing an evil motive, is totally incapable of performing an evil action: and *that* which is totally incapable of possessing a good motive, is totally incapable of performing a good action, in a moral sense: hence, unless we admit that *man* is capable of acting from different motives, we do away all distinction in their moral actions; which is saying, in other words, there is no difference between *virtue* and *vice*!

"Fools! who from hence into the notion fall, That vice or virtue there is none at all; If white and black blend, soften, and unite A thousand ways, is there no black or white!"

There are always two extremes to every line of mathematical demonstration. And while we ought to guard against *acknowledging* such a thing as a *creature goodness*, independent of God; so we ought, equally, to guard against *denying* the goodness of God, to be *good*, although discovered in his *creature man*!

By the foregoing it will be seen in what point of light I view the actions of men. I think I shall be understood.

"It seems then, says the objector, that our vices are not to be attributed to the devil, but to the influence which objects have on our minds. Answer.

"Surely the reader ought to expect, that after I have denied the existence of a being, I should, likewise deny his power.

"Perhaps, however, the reader may be surprised, to find that I do not believe in the existence of a being so universally acknowledged among Christian people, and which, perhaps, has been of as much advantage, to some, as the *Goddess Diana* was to the *craftsmen* of *Ephesus*.

"But I am willing to give my reasons for not believing with the multitude in this particular.

"A created individual being cannot be in more than one place, at the same time. But how many millions of places must this evil angel be in, at once, in order to perform the business which Christians\* have allotted to him! In

\*i. e. Those Christians who believe in, the existence of such a being.

order for me to believe in such a being, I must give him the omnipresence of the Almighty, which belongs to none, in my opinion, but my Maker.

"Again, to admit the existence of such a being would be of no avail, as there is nothing for him to do. There is, says the objector, he tempts men to sin. But does he tempt men contrary to their passions and the influence of their motives? Answer, no. Then the temptation is of no possible consequence. Supposing a man to be exceedingly hungry, and an agreeable meal is set before him, and he is invited to refresh; at that moment the devil comes and tempts him to eat: what effect would the temptation have on the hungry man? Or supposing, in room of tempting him to eat, he should tempt him not to eat, would he be likely to succeed?

"But what means the Scripture, which speaks of a devil; one who was a liar from the beginning, &c.? I answer, I have no objection to believing, that there is such a *devil* as the *Scripture* speaks of. He is called the old serpent, and is the same I have described. It is he which beguiled the woman, in the beginning; even the *carnal mind*, which is enmity against God. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, saith the Lord, between her seed and thy seed." An apostle says, "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things ye would." And that this was the first beguiler, we may learn from the Scripture, which saith, "Lust, when it conceived, brought forth sin; and sin, when it was finished, brought forth death," James i, 15.

If *lust*, then, be the cause of sin, we need not impute it to any other devil: or, in other words, we are authorized to say, that *lust* is the *devil* spoken of in Scripture.

It may, however, be asked here, if *lust* be the devil, what are we to understand by the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation; of whom it is said, "God hath reserved in everlasting chains of darkness unto the judgment of the great day," Jude 6.

I might also ask, in my turn, for what purpose is this passage introduced? If it be brought to prove that the devil



is a real being, it comes too late: for it has been shown already that angels are not devils, unless they be the angels of the devil; and it ought to be first proved that the devil himself is a real being, before it can be admitted, with any degree of propriety, that his angels are such. Nevertheless, as I proposed to say something respecting angels, I am not unwilling to give my opinion on the above text.

I do not object to the idea of the existence of celestial, as well as terrestrial beings; but think it rational to suppose, that as we discover life in all parts of the habitable creation, in different grades, from man, down to the worm, or the insect; and even life existing on life, down to microscopic animals; so there may be also celestial beings, or angels, which inhabit the celestial regions.

But it is evident, that by angels in Scripture, we are sometimes, at least, to understand nothing more than men. The angels of the seven churches, to whom John directed the book of the Revelation, were undoubtedly the ministers of those churches. "Ye received me," said Paul to the Galatians, "as an angel of God," Gal. iv, 14. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares," Heb. xiii, 2. By all which it appears, that angels, according to Scripture, either were men, or else, they appeared so much like men, that one might be easily taken for the other.

But the testimony recorded in Matth. xi, 10, Mark i, 2, and Luke vii, 27, is conclusive, that even a mere man may be constituted an angel of God. "For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee." This is the record concerning John the Baptist, which the reader will see by turning to the passages referred to above, and the original word rendered *messenger* is *αγγελος*, the same that is rendered *angel* throughout the New Testament. See also Mal. iii, 1.

John the Baptist, then, was the angel of God, who was sent to prepare the way for the coming of the Just One, the Shiloh, the Angel of the covenant, (by which, Christ, undoubtedly, is to be understood) to whom the gathering of the people shall be. See Acts vii. 52. Gen. xlix, 10. Mal. iii. 1.

Now, as Christ and John were certainly angels, according to Scripture, and as Paul also was received as an angel of God, I shall undoubtedly be justified in considering the angels that kept not their first estate, men.

I shall not, however, be very tenacious of this idea, as I consider it to be rather a matter of indifference, to us, who they were; and since I have admitted the probability of celestial beings, and as they all must have been created beings, it is possible, at least, that some of them have sinned, as well as man. But I can hardly conceive it probable—it appears to me that they must be composed of too pure materials to possess either lust or passion—or to be subject to corruption, either natural or moral. I am inclined to think that sin is of too gross a nature to be attached to spiritual, or celestial beings.

The angels that kept not their first estate are, undoubtedly, the same as the angels that sinned, spoken of by Peter. See 2 Peter ii, 4. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."\*

But as I have before shown that men may be considered angels, the text will admit of a different construction.†

But I need not insist any longer on this point, for whether we consider the angels that sinned to be originally celestial, or terrestrial beings, it does not militate against the main argument contended for in this Treatise; that is, that the devil is not of himself, a real being. Therefore, having shown that the original word, *αγγελος*, which is generally rendered *angel*, in the trans-

\* "Or if God spared not the messenger, who had sinned, i. e. the spies who went to explore the land of Canaan. See Numbers xiv. This may be thought by some a far fetched interpretation. But if the common interpretation be admitted, it will not establish the popular doctrine concerning fallen angels. For, 1. The epistle itself is of doubtful authority. 2. From the change of style, this is the most doubtful portion of the epistle: 3. By those who admit the genuineness of the epistle, this chapter, is supposed to have been a quotation from some ancient apocryphal book, and the apostle might not mean to give authority to the doctrine, but to argue with his readers upon known and allowed principles." See Improved Version, note on the place: and also note on Jude 6.

† See the note above.

lation, simply signifies nothing more, nor less, than a *messenger*, and therefore the importance of the word must be derived from the importance of the office, or message, on which the messenger is sent; and having also shown that this word may be applied to men, as well as celestial beings; and was applied to Christ the angel of the covenant, to John the Baptist the harbinger of Christ, to Paul the chief apostle to the Gentiles, and to the ministers of the seven churches of Asia, I shall now leave the subject of the angels that sinned and kept not their first estate, for the reader to form his own conclusion.

To be continued.

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FROM THE UNIVERSALIST MAGAZINE.

#### CHARITY.

Hail child of love, in robes of light,  
Descend and burst upon our sight;  
Dispel the gloom that hangs around,  
And cheer our hearts with heav'nly sound.

Let thy blest name by man be known,  
Till ev'ry soul by grace shall own,  
That God's eternal love shall flow,  
To all his children here below.

Then discord shall no more be found,  
Dividing peace on hallow'd ground;  
But from thy blissful presence flee,  
And earth be blest with CHARITY:

Come all ye men of wrath and strife,  
Behold this lamp of light and life,  
And let the tongue of slander fail,  
And let this heav'nly grace prevail.

Then shall our churches here be found,  
As plants of peace on earthly ground;  
And love and union there be known,  
And all mankind God's grace shall own.

Thou Sun of suns, arise and shine,  
Fill every soul with grace divine;  
May thy blest song of life be sung,  
By ev'ry name, by ev'ry tongue.

O may my soul on pinions rise,  
To yonder bright and cloudless skies,  
And walk in streets of purest gold,  
Thy grace and glory to behold. J. W. S.

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FROM THE SAME.

#### THE DYING CHRISTIANS FAREWELL;

FAREWELL dear parnter, children too,  
Brothers and sisters, parents all,  
Encircling friends I bid adieu,  
To go at my dear Saviour's call.

Sweet music's sound salutes my ears,  
More blissful far, than can compare  
With earthly music; stay your fears,  
It is from heaven, soon I am there:

Surrounding friends row dry your eyes,  
Since now 'tis here perceiv'd so plain;  
My soul leaves earth to heav'n it flies,  
And quick a blissful state will gain. G.